



WHAT'S WORKING

A Message From DJJ Director Andy Block

Aug. 11, 2014

Making A Big Difference, One Life At A Time

Amber Nesbitt's mantra when working with youth as a probation officer at CSU 12–Chesterfield is “treat the families as you would want your family to be treated.” By adhering to this mantra, Nesbitt has found that her families can achieve anything. One such family has accomplished more than they thought possible with the help of Amber's guidance and patience.

“I received a girl on probation last year—she was a basketball star at her high school but was hanging out with the wrong crowd and she and her mother had a struggling relationship,” says Nesbitt about one of her most recent cases. Throughout her work with this child, she constantly tried to find motivators for the young lady to meet all of her probation requirements. “Basketball became a big motivating factor,” Nesbitt says. “If she wanted to travel out of state with the team, she knew she had to follow her probation guidelines.”

Nesbitt took an interest in the young woman's basketball, commenting on how many points she had scored and asking questions about the games and practices. “Basketball allowed us to connect on a more personal level and to figure out what was truly driving her actions,” she says. After the girl spent several months on probation, Nesbitt had not only turned this young woman's life around, but had been able to reconnect the mother with her daughter. In individual sessions Amber encouraged the mother to engage in her daughter's after-school hobby and support strong choices using basketball as a motivating factor.

In May Amber received an e-mail from the young lady's mother informing her that her daughter would not only be attending college in the fall but had received a basketball scholarship. “You were supportive of her and it showed that she was more than just your ‘job,’” the grateful



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– E-mail to Amber Nesbitt from grateful mother

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Amber Nesbitt's experience is a reminder that we can all connect on some level as long as we have the drive and dedication to try. Thank you to Amber and to all DJJ probation officers for their hard work and motivational spirit.